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POEMS OF
BELIEF

THEODORE C. WILLIAMS



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By Theodore C. Williams

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POEMS OF BELIEF

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(See page 33.)

The Soul in Bondage

POEMS OF BELIEF

BY

THEODORE C. WILLIAMS

WITH A FRONTISPIECE
BY ELIHU VEDDER



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
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DEDICATION

ERE our waking loves begun,
Dreams alone to song gave wing;
Thou at last discovered, won,
Hast thy part in all I sing.

Though my songs appear to rove,
Never could they rove from thee.
When the theme was less than love,
Love beside me struck the key.

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POEMS OF BELIEF

THE LILY AND THE PINE

I FOUND a lily near my door
Which bloomed an hour, then bloomed no more;
And her pure-hearted perfectness
 My heart did bless.

I saw high up the mountain cold
A pine a hundred winters old;
For his strong-hearted patience there
 I breathed a prayer.

O hour of sweetly breathing life!
O century of strength and strife!
I only know that in each one
 God's will was done.

MY SHELL

A SHELL upon the sounding sands
 Flashed in the sunshine where it lay.
Its green disguise I tore; my hands
 Bore the rich treasure-trove away.

Within, the chamber of the pearl
 Blushed like the rose, like opal glowed;
And o'er its domes a cloudy swirl
 Of mimic waves and rainbows flowed.

“Strangely,” I said, “the artist-worm
 Has made his secret bower so bright!
This jeweller, this draftsman firm
 Was born and died in eyeless night.

“Deep down in many-monstered caves
 His miracle of beauty throve;
Far from all light, against strong waves,
 A Castle Beautiful he wove.

“Take courage, soul! Thy labor blind
 The lifting tides may onward bear
To some glad shore, where thou shalt find
 Light, and a Friend to say, ‘How fair!’”

THE VOYAGE OF LIFE

LIFE is a voyage. The winds of life come strong
From every point; yet each will speed thy course along,
If thou with steady hand when tempests blow,
Canst keep thy course aright and never once let go.

Life is a voyage. Ask not the port unknown
Whither thy Captain guides his storm-tossed vessel on;
Nor tremble thou lest mast should snap and reel;
But note his orders well, and mind, unmoved, thy wheel.

Life's voyage is on the vast, unfathomed sea
Whereof the tides are times, the shores, eternity;
Seek not with plummet, when the great waves roll,
But by the stars in heaven mark which way sails thy
soul.

THE TRUE PRIEST ¹

LORD, who dost the voices bless
Crying in the wilderness,
And the lovely gifts increase
Of the messengers of peace,
Thou, whose temple is with men,
Show us Thy true priest again.

In the holy place may he
Thine immediate presence see;
Or through deserts, Father, led,
Show Thy people heavenly bread,
While his lips at Thy control
Warn, instruct, inspire, console.

Give him to his priestly dress
Faith and zeal and righteousness.
Then, lest all Thy gifts be lost,
Breathe Thy gift of Pentecost, —
Love, whose many-languaged fire
Finds each listening soul's desire.

¹ Ordination Hymn. Tune "Refuge."

A PRAYER FOR LIFE

BE with me, Lord! My house is growing still,
As one by one the guests go out the door;
And some who helped me once to do Thy will
Behold and bless Thee on the Heavenly Shore.

Uphold my strength! My task is not yet done.
Nor let me at the labor cease to sing;
But from the rising to the setting sun,
Each faithful hour, do service to my king.

Show me Thy light! Let not my wearied eyes
Miss the fresh gladness of life's passing day,
But keep the light of morn, the sweet surprise
Of each new blessing that attends my way.

And for the crowning grace, O Lord, renew
The best of gifts Thy best of saints have had:
With the great joy of Christ my heart endue,
To share the whole world's tears and still be glad.

THE SINGING SOUL

A hundred leagues of land and sea,
A boundless reach of sky,
Closed round the singing soul of me,
And woke this glad reply.

I marvel what such vast expense
Of power is nourished by,
And how my microcosmic sense
Such height and depth can spy.

Yet where my eyes the fragments scan,
Or view the glorious whole,
I find free harmony with man,
And truth that feeds his soul.

Not all your powers, earth, sky, and sea,
My watchful heart appall:
The same just laws guard you and me,
One life sustains us all.

ALL IN ALL

EVERY atom gives resistance not the universe can
break;

Each rose-petal holds perfection angel artists could not
make.

As each white wave feels the motion of the moon-led,
tidal main,

Plato and the seven sages shine in every human brain.

Each true prayer foretastes the glory saints and pro-
phets burn to teach;

In my brother's heart enfolded lies the kingdom Christ
would reach.

Under every power and passion stirs the element divine:
If I grasp the moment's meaning, all eternity is mine.

THY BROTHER ¹

WHEN thy heart with joy o'er-flowing
Sings a thankful prayer,
In thy joy, O let thy Brother
With thee share.

When the harvest sheaves ingathered
Fill thy barns with store,
To thy God and to thy Brother
Give the more.

If thy soul with power uplifted
Yearn for glorious deed,
Give thy strength to serve thy Brother
In his need.

Hast thou borne a secret sorrow
In thy lonely breast?
Take to thee thy sorrowing Brother
For a guest.

Share with him thy bread of blessing,
Sorrow's burden share.
When thy heart enfolds a Brother,
God is there.

¹ Tune "Geneva."

MY FRIEND

A FRIEND I had who, when his heart was cold,
 Warmed it, he said, with life-enkindling wine,
 Made from no mortal grape, but of a vine
Planted by Christ and never waxing old.

This wondrous man, when wearily and slow
 A comrade walked, would make his shoulders bare
 And whisper, "Brother, put thy burden there."
He walked, he said, with Christ, and rested so.

Then one black day I knew my friend must die.
 I wept and strove. My heart was torn in twain.
 But he! — he smiled like heaven upon my pain
And said, "Would God thou wert as blest as I."

A THANATOPSIS

DEATH is an angel with two faces :
To us he turns
A face of terror, blighting all things fair ;
The other burns
With glory of the stars, and love is there ;
And angels see that face in heavenly places.

Two strong, sharp swords are in the hands of Death :
One smites to dust
Dear beauty's idol and the thrones of power,
And long, sweet years in that brief, awful hour
Vanish because they must ;
His other and his stronger sword is just :
It slays untruth, and mocks at this world's lust, —
O liberating Death !

Strive, O my soul, to see
The heavenly face and that delivering sword !
Till I shall be
All truly fashioned to th' Incarnate Word,
And live, not knowing death, in Thee, O Lord !

TWICE GIVEN

God gave the world His Son; and he was known
For God's own Son, because he took the throne
Of perfect love that seeketh not her own,
And giving freely, as to him was given,
Made love on Earth commune with love in Heaven.

A perfect gift thy Father gives to thee, —
Thyself, with all thy powers: yet all will be
Imperfect, weak and in captivity,
Till thou, His child, give all thyself away
To God and to thy brother, day by day.

PASTOR BONUS

A WHITE young lamb upon my breast I bore :

My arms are empty now ; and through my tears
O'er a wide river, on a shining shore,
Another Shepherd with my lamb appears.

Each evening safely in his fold she lies ;

And every day, through pastures green and fair,
Follows her Shepherd under sunny skies, —
And all the flock of Christ walk with her there.

A flock unnumbered ! Yet each star above

With differing glory fills the heavenly frame, —
And my white lamb, in those vast realms of love,
The Shepherd knows and calls her by her name.

A LENTEN SECRET

I STRUGGLED with my burden, till one day
I strove no longer: then it fell away.

I nursed my wounds in vain with skilful balm;
Not till I nursed them not my flesh grew calm.

My heaviest cross I weeping would not bear;
I lifted it, and lo! 't was light as air!

Askest thou how such troubles so could bless?
God touched each one, — and it was nothingness.

THE FREE SPIRIT

THERE is no fate :
Thy high or low estate
Comes of thy climbing or thy falling down.
No baleful star
A brave man's bliss can bar ;
No kingly planet keep a coward's crown.

Dost thou complain
Because God's frost and rain
To thy white cheek seem much too wet or cold ?
Dost thou not know
God's angels, rain and snow,
Swathe earth in robes of silver, fold on fold ?

Cease, luckless man,
To curse thy being's plan !
For wert thou to thine own true birthright true,
Thou wert set free,
As are the winds, the sea,
Or eagles mounting in the trackless blue.

THE WINTER VICTORY

WE are not children of the sun,
With myrtle garlands glad and gay,
Who weep when Summer's mirth is done
And fling the pipes of Pan away.

The conquerors of a land of snow,
We fear not Winter's leafless time;
Swift winds and flames, our servants, go
To fetch us flowers of every clime.

Beneath the steadfast northern star
Our blazing hearthstone never fails,
Where heart to heart draws closer far
Than lovers in Arcadian vales.

Not ours to meet the Winter's birth
With sighs, but with fresh tasks begun.
We rule the many-seasoned earth;
We are not children of the sun.

STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS

FATHER, to-day
I humbly pray
× Into no sin my hasty feet may stray.

My wilfulness,
Till Thou shalt bless,
Cannot sustain me in true holiness.

My boasted might
To choose the right,
Forgetting Thee, my God, is mean and slight.

My wing of love
Not aimed above
Goes trailing in the mire and is not love.

My sight, my power,
My love's brief hour
Are loss and dross, until some starry dower

From Heaven shall shine
On what seems mine,
And bless poor me with light and life divine.

THE SILENT HOUR ¹

As the storm retreating
Leaves the vales in peace,
Let the world's vain noises
O'er our spirits cease.

Sounds of wrath and striving,
Man with man at war,
Hearts with Heaven contending, —
Hear we now no more.

Now the hours of stillness
Wondrous visions show;
Heaven unfolds before us,
Angels come and go.

Holy, human faces,
From earth's shadows free,
Look with love upon us,
Bid us patient be.

Almost we discern them,
Almost read their smile,
Almost hear them saying —
“Wait a little while.”

Thus in hours of stillness
Faith to Heaven shall rise,
Till death's last, deep silence
Quite unseals our eyes. AMEN.

¹ Tune “Merrial.”

THE ENDLESS QUEST

ERE true love its love can tell,
Ere fond hope flies half its range,
Trembling in the marriage-bell
Sobs an undertone of change.

Glory toiled for, fought for, won,
Name and fame and conquest proud,
Ere the conqueror's day be done,
Melt like mad Ixion's cloud.

Man was born on earth to roam,
Dream-struck, dazed, and self-beguiled,
Toward his migratory home
In th' unnamed, unchartered wild.

Could one man the realms possess
Of his visionary eye,
He would perish of excess,
Or of disenchantment die.

THE AUTUMNAL HOPE

THOUGH the autumn's dying glory
Flames along the lordly hill,
Love will tell no mournful story,
Faith not feel the season's chill.

Leaves may fall, but all their fading
Steals no life of living tree.
Still, through deeper cells pervading,
Thrills the life we cannot see.

Hush, my heart, thy fancies dreary!
Autumn's sadness is a cheat.
Forests rest when they are weary,
But their winter sleep is sweet.

Buds beneath the branches dreaming,
Roots that slumber in the snow,
Whisper, "Death is but a seeming,
Life the only truth we know."

A SABBATH EVENING

I THANK thee, Lord, that just to-day
I have not seemed to go astray,
And that to-night the setting sun
Shines only on my duty done.

Father! not thus Thy name I bless
From proud or blind self-righteousness;
Nor that I thus would hope to win
Remission of some wilful sin.

But if to-night I lift my eyes
Unto the all-beholding skies,
And seem to feel within me shine
Some kinship with their calm divine, —

The silent blessing bids me pray,
By this one glad and blameless day,
To learn what all my days might be,
If each were holy unto Thee.

THE OFFENDING

(After George Herbert)

PLUCK out my heart! 'T is a stale piece of food —

O shame! —

Unfit for Thee to taste.

Take it, my God, at last,

And frame

A fair and good.

Why is it that my heart should not be set

On Thee?

I hasten to draw near,

And ere I be aware,

I flee.

O spare me yet!

My deeds which should be pageants to declare

Thy praise,

Do mock Thy mighty love.

My God, when shall Thy Dove

My ways

Make straight and fair?

THE OFFENDING

Once did I think my furious eagle-soul
 Had eyes
 To stare upon the sun.
My God, what have I done?
 Thy skies
 I have made foul.

Blind eyes were better than this sight of smart,
 My sin.
O make me blind, sick, dumb!
Then lest rebellion come
 Within,
 Pluck out my heart.

BENEDICTION

God be with thee! Gently o'er thee
 May His wings of mercy spread;
Be His way made plain before thee,
 And His glory round thee shed.
 Safely onward,
 May thy pilgrim-feet be led.

God be with thee! With thy spirit
 His abiding presence be;
Till thy heart that peace inherit,
 God alone can give to thee.
 His indwelling,
 Help, and heal, and set thee free.

GOD IN ALL

THE flowing Soul, nor low nor high,
Is perfect here, is perfect there.
Each drop in ocean orbs the sky,
And seeing eyes make all things fair.

The evening cloud, the wayside flower
Surpass the Andes and the rose;
And wrapped in every hasty hour
Is all the lengthened year bestows.

Therefore erase thy false degrees,
From stock and stone strike starry fire.
Lo! even in the least of these
Dwells the Lord Christ, the world's desire.

THE FELLOW LABORERS

Not a star our eyes can see
Shines alone for you and me;
Distant worlds behold its light,
Ages hence 't will shine as bright.

Not a flower that breathes and blows
Just for us its perfume throws;
Hosts of happy insect things
Brush it with their quickening wings.

Brooks, as from the hills they flow,
Make green meadows as they go;
Cataracts of wrathful sound
Turn the mill-wheels round and round.

Each strong thing some service gives
Far and wide; and nothing lives
For itself or just its own:
'T is but death to live alone.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Out of a vanishing cloud

And the wind-blown dust that flies,
God made a human heart, endowed
With light from the central skies.

'T was cast on a furious flood

Of a million changeeful things,
And fever and fear consumed its blood:—
But the creature was born with wings.

The wings were a banner of flame

Among the stars unfurled;
And the Light in Man at the last became
The light of the whole round world.

THY HEART IN CHAMBERS TWAIN

(From the German)

THY heart in chambers twain
Doth shelter
Two neighbors, Joy and Pain.

If Joy be wide awake,
Her neighbor
A longed-for rest will take.

O Joy, if thou be wise,
Step lightly,
Lest Pain from sleep arise.

POSSESSION

LET not my own my owner be.
Possessions, if they serve not me,
Are golden-chained captivity.

HOSPITALITY

IN vain my host at banquet free
Gives far-fetched fruit and wine :
If soul to soul he meets not me,
On beggar's crust I dine.

DEMOCRACY

THE kings are drones, the angered people cried.
The strong have gagged us, robbed us, and their eyes
Are blinded. Let the people's wit be tried!
Much work and little bread have made us wise.

MAN'S INFINITY

To mete and sway a bounded sphere
With patient heart and free,
And harvest all his Now and Here,
Is Man's infinity.

NOVEMBER

THE bare November, like a stern divine,
Frowned on my soul, discoursing of decay,
Of time, flesh, dust, and pleasure's hasty day,
Reiterating weary line on line
Death's threadbare homily. "O Nature mine,"
I cried in wrath, "thou who didst breathe last May
The spirit of gladness in young lambs at play,
Show thyself potent yet, by one sure sign."

Then the moon rose. I saw her, full and calm,
Move through the large clouds, as a mother might
From room to room where sleeping children lie.
"My son," she said to me, "since yesternight
I made my blissful round through Italy,
From far Cathay and silvered isles of palm."

THE THESEUS OF THE PARTHENON

'T IS the scarred ruin of a god-like face.

Lost, lost forever, the proud light it wore!

The limbs, the robe are lovely as of yore;

The lordly neck still keeps an awful grace;

The clear brows front us still without a trace

Of earth's imperfectness: while we deplore

That men of our frail mould may blend no more

Man's self-poised strength with god-like charm and
peace.

Yet even the ruin speaks. That beauteous mien

Of Theseus, hero of a vanished prime,

Would look on Athens only while she bred

Men valorous and youth high-souled and clean;

He blessed all Hellas through her golden time,

Then veiled those eyes from Greeks enslaved and
dead.

MY HOST

A GUEST was I. My Host lived rich and free;
Feasts, gardens, music, guests of noble name,
Sweet sleep, good talk, gay youth and lovely dame, —
All made my pleasures. Said my Host to me:
“The house is yours. I bid its servants be
Quick to obey you. Make increasing claim
Of all your heart can wish. It is my aim
These guests of mine shall use whate’er they see.”

Then some one said : “ Since here we have such powers,
All is our own ; and better place it were
Could we forget this potent Master nigh,
And feast unwatched of his all-seeing eye.”
Through all the guests great trouble then did stir :
And voices cried, “ This house is God’s, not ours.”

THE SOUL IN BONDAGE

(See Frontispiece)

I SAW a heaven-born soul, whose earthly frame
Was strength and beauty. But about her twined
Loose-woven bonds; and slave-like she resigned
Her limbs to hopeless sleep, which seemed the same
As coming death; nor felt she any shame
Of bonds and nakedness, but locked her mind
In her unopening eyes, and, wilful blind,
Saw not behind her the sun's orb of flame.

For groping at her bonds, she said, "They hold
The skies from which I fell." Yet her own hand
Held immortality. I could but see
Her bonds were gossamer; and I was told
That she must feel her strength some day, and stand
Unbound, awake, her heavenly wings set free.

GIBRALTAR

Dost thou, great England, guard thy greatness here
By thy bold Lion Rock's imperial pride,
Only that thy swift merchant ships may ride,
Encircling the rich globe, without a fear
Of any wrath but heaven's? Dost thou uprear
These bastions in mere greed? Hast thou defied
Navies of many kings and multiplied
Thy strongholds in all seas, that year by year
Only thine English greatness might increase?
Not so, Gibraltar! Let thy fortress stand
To keep the oceans free, and hold each land
In righteous brotherhood with all, till Peace,
At last uplifting her resistless hand,
Shall bid the nations from their discord cease.

IN A TIME OF NATIONAL SCANDAL

HER own sons shamed my country with much gold :
The lavish gifts her own full bounty gave
Imperilled what our sires brought o'er the wave
Of freedom and of faith in God. Men told
In lands where lords, priests, slaves and monarchs hold
The soul in chains, that freedom could not save
Our new-world men from sinking in that grave
Where over Babylon or Rome have rolled
The oblivious centuries. We knew and blushed.
Yet the great people's heart was in the way
Of wisdom ever. Fortune's pampered son
May wander or go mad. But in the hushed
Most holy temple where men love, toil, pray,
In common manhood, freedom's cause is won.

ÆNEAS

IF after kingdoms lost, dark griefs and shames,
Storms and sad exile, some stern power pursues
The sacred hero still; yet may the Muse
In his prophetic heart evoke the names
Of mightier, more benignant gods: she claims
Consolatory office, to infuse
Faith in the future and high heart to use
The present task, though base, for kingly aims.

Nor is it least of her good gifts to show
The exile among alien shores and seas,
How human hearts are touched by human tears
Even in unknown eyes. For strangers know
If men have toiled and wept, and make with these
Concord of song the Muse approving hears.

TO VIRGIL

THY Rome died many deaths. Her native power
By slow diseases, such as nations know
When liberty is lost, became a show
And pageantry for slaves; then came the hour
Of outward death, as when a withered flower
Falls in a tempest; o'er her lying low
The barbarous legions in resistless flow
Rained seas of death on temple, street and tower.

But thou, imperial Virgil, couldst not die.
Still through strange seas thy storm-tossed Trojans
fare;
Thy visions live; thy voice is singing still.
We wanderers to a vaster West descrie
New worlds, new sorrows: but true hearts that bear
The sacred past, seek Heaven's prophetic will.

TO DEATH

WHY art thou blind, O Death? Why dost thou choose
At random whither thy keen shaft is flung?
Gray-bearded crime and virtue dying young
Look all alike to thee. Thou dost confuse
Th' oppressor with his prey; fond love may lose
Its loveliest; or justest hate be stung
By its long-lingering object. With what tongue
Canst thou, fool Death! thy frenzied strokes excuse?

But haply thy dark wisdom would make scorn
Of mortal judgments, and would loudly say:
"Nothing is sure; nor beauty, wit, nor worth
Have long to stay. Oh, therefore, sons of Earth,
Draw close, clasp hands, give life's best gifts away,
And ere love passes, prove why love was born."

THE EARTH CELESTIAL

ROLL, little Earth, along thy star-lit round !

Light at the sun thine own quenched lamp of power !

Thy slow-evolving age and swiftest hour

Are measured by the light that knows no bound.

What if thou borrow all? No stir, nor sound,

Nor life, nor spark of thought, but is the dower

Of thy celestial birth; thy least field-flower

Is fed by stars across the gulf profound.

Thy beauty never of itself was bred;

By their star-clock thy seasons punctual be.

Let fading centuries pass! Old Earth in thee

Let land and ocean hide their millions dead!

On with the stars, swift globe! Thy warm dust rolls

Through the same sky that breathed thee full of
souls.

TO A POET WHO FEARED THE LOSS OF
YOUTH

Dost thou forebode the passing of the morn
While yet thy rose of youth is wet with dew?
Doth thy fresh laurel twine itself with yew,
And when thou shouldst be glad, art thou forlorn?
Or is there on thy lip some curve of scorn,
Seeing how meanly men grow old, how few
But feel the world's false kiss has worked them rue,
Like Samson by Delilah mocked and shorn?

Follow the Muses, brother! They endow
With youth immortal; and give equal praise
To gray Mæonides of sightless eyes,
Or flushed youth singing life's first wild surprise.
Honor each Muse! But mark Urania's brow
Lifting unruffled o'er our lapse of days!

BOUNDLESSNESS

(“ La Nature est prodigue, non parce-qu’elle est folle, mais parce qu’elle est riche.”)

So many seeds that will not grow!
So many planets black and bare!
So many creatures writhing slow
Through lives which seem dumb chaos, where
Wild, empty dreams drift on in aimless flow!

Unnumbered life-engendering beams
Speed forth from every potent star;
But most are lost, — mere pin-point gleams
Whose light is quenched by travelling far.
What goal or gain the boundless waste redeems?

Hath Nature, who with sparing hand
Weighs out each morsel to the worm,
Like madmen building towers of sand,
Bound fast her parts in form and term,
But for the whole mere dull confusion planned?

Why hold I in my sanest mind
Such faith in Nature’s wise excess?
Why does my soul, so small, so blind,
Glory so much in boundlessness?
Why ask I not that heaven have one star less?

BOUNDLESSNESS

Oh, what if this exuberant whole,
O'er-leaping measure, mark and bound,
Be subject to unseen control?
What if all lost notes gathered up shall sound
God's endless music to Man's deathless soul?

RESURRECTIO CARNIS

O LIVING flesh I call my own,
My portion brief of earth and air,
Men bring thee bread from every zone
And fetch from far thy substance rare.

The dew of morning fills thy veins,
The cool, salt sea within thee flows,
The sunbeam's throb thy heart sustains,
Thy blush is fellow to the rose.

Thou hast no commerce with decay,
Thine elements are star-fed fires,
Each frail breath of thy mortal day
From boundless life its life respires.

O living flesh, what wilt thou be
When my brief tenancy is done?
Still shalt thou not in earth or sea
Take golden tribute of the sun?

So kindred to what will not die,
Dear flesh, I scorn thy doubts and fears.
Thy mortal portents pass me by
And melt in God's eternal years.

A SOUL IN STORM

CONTINUALLY stirred man's soul must be
By agonies, by whirlwinds of desire,
Lest it should stagnate, lest the living flow
Of elemental power should be cut off
Both from its fount and goal. Oh, what is death?
'T is the last tempest in life's little pool
To rouse it to the depth, until it burst
Its inland bound and flow forth upon tides
That sweep unmeasured to the utmost shore
Of God's last star, so finding rest at last.
Rest? Who can tell if rest indeed be gain?
Who fears great storms, fears what shall surely blow
If oceans he would cross: and if my soul
From star to star would travel, if I be
Not land-locked ever in earth's transient haven,
Must I not pray God, not for peace and calm,
But to sail storm-proof o' His vaster seas?

THE SPHINX

OUT of the changeful fury of the tide-rifts stream-
ing by

Wilt build thee, O World, a place of peace, and show
God by and by?

Or all the riot of roses and the loves that escape
control,

Are they rainbows shed on a melting cloud from the
central sun of my soul?

O musical storms and stars, do ye strike wild chords
unplanned?

Or is there a master-musician, who leads with
uplifted hand?

If a god's will shape the heavens, is he perfect,
boundless, free?

Or feels he the bondage of violent dust? Does he
suffer and strive like me?

I know that I never shall answer the riddles that
haunt the mind.

I see but a spark of the infinite flame, — to all the
rest born blind.

THE SPHINX

Yet envy I not the gazers who boast of their clearer
sight;
For safer I walk if I know I am blind, than calling the
darkness light.

For all my riddle unanswered, for all my blindness
known,
I would rather keep asking the secret than to make it
all my own.
I believe that the stir of the questions is the spirit's
ultimate breath.
All life is a passionate question. Wilt thou not answer
it, Death?

THE ROYAL SELF

If to this earth from some superior star
My spirit fell, and if, as Plato dreamed,
My task is to recover from afar
The vigor lost, from servitude redeemed,

It were not hard to bear the darkened day,
Or not impossible to find once more,
Though blind, though bleeding, the returning way,
And hope for home upon this alien shore.

Or if I be the heir of victor-beast,
And, born of victory, may hopeful strive,
Because ascent is life: so at the least,
I think I could sustain my soul alive.

But I refuse to drift. I will not be
A bubble on a stream of stars, to dance,
To eddy round and shine like something free,
Then burst my film of being at a chance.

Yes, I refuse. The powers beyond my ken
May laugh as tyrants do upon a slave.
My will may be delusion, and we men
May at the last snatch nothing from the grave.

THE ROYAL SELF

Yet in this moment that I call my own,
This flash-light life of mine shall be a thing
Colored by my soul's act. If this brief throne
Must fall, — at least I'll use it like a king.

SURSUM CORDA

Not a star a moment stays;
Every beam it gives replaces
Starry beams of vanished days
Into endless darkness sped.
The lifted Alp's perpetual head
Crumbles away, and every storm defaces
Some fragment of its fiery prime;
The mountain granite yields to time
Surely as blown roses fail,
Or the cheek of youth turns pale,
Or o'er the poet's would-be deathless rhyme
Oblivious years prevail.

Why, then, O my frivolous soul!
Sue or execrate the skies,
If visibly before thy wrathful eyes
Some mansion melt which once thou couldst
control?
Shall the fading rainbow grieve thee?
Or if lovely music leave thee,
Wilt thou curse it as it goes?
Wilt thou in scorn
Keep the thorn,
And trample fiercely on a faded rose?

SURSUM CORDA

Rather thou shalt be aware,
As life's apparition flows,
Of earth and sky whence thou didst pluck thy
 rose;
Of a boundless wealth and free
That can a million-fold repair
The broken beauty that now grieveth thee.

Battle lost, or battle won,
Glorious the conflict done.
Go, rainbows! I have found the sun.

IMMORTAL MIND

WHAT are centuries or æons, but as flowers that bloom
and die?

What is earth? One planet-blossom in the garden of
the sky.

What is Man? O Time! O Planet! Shall he ripen by
and by?

Through the formless deep, they tell us, ere the spheres
in order ran,

Stirred a beam, a breath of godhead, dawned a demi-
urgic plan,

While the throbbing star-dust atoms danced in pro-
phesy of Man.

Who beheld the myriad epochs vanished since the earth
was born,

Who beheld from pole to centre the fresh globe con-
vulsed and torn,

Who beheld her isles and oceans shifting like the clouds
of morn?

IMMORTAL MIND

If the angels watched the wonder, 't was as mortal eyes
 behold
Surf that breaks, or flames outleaping, or the rainbow's
 transient gold :
None but God saw why or whither the tumultuous ages
 rolled.

Say not yon unfathomed heavens yield to Man their
 deep decree ;
Say not all-adventuring Science knows what is or what
 shall be.
Where are alpha and omega ? Who has written, who
 can see ?

Shall the limpet on the sea-cliff pathway o'er the ocean
 find ?
Knows the insect in the sunbeam what far orbs our
 planet bind ?
Oh ! if dust to dust returneth, Man, no less, dies,
 cosmos-blind.

Is God's glorious work forever witnessed by Himself
 alone ?
Shall there be no deathless creature standing near th'
 Eternal Throne ?
If one soul be God's companion, — Child of Man,
 why not thine own ?

HERAKLEITOS

THROUGH the universe I see
Movement, rhythm and degree.
Nothing is but was before
Something less or something more.
Wave on wave the starry light
Strikes our fluctuating sight.
Through the glory of the sun
Fields of ebbing darkness run.

Life from life forever breeding,
Life on life forever feeding,
Th' invulnerable parasite
Finds a glory and delight
Always in some vaster whole:
As stars of stars receive control,
And oceans into oceans roll.

Nothing lives of its own labor,
Each must borrow of a neighbor.
Kings by beggars' pence are fed,
And the serf has daily bread
Only if the wise and great
Fructify his mean estate.

Nature's rapine and decay
Takes a smooth, melodious way.

HERAKLEITOS

See the serpent on the bough
Coiling surely, fixing now
On the dove his jewelled eye, —
Bids her his new pleasures try.
She in wonder at such wooing,
Ratifies her own undoing,
Yields her in a dreamful trance
To his life-consuming glance,
Till in her breast with scarce a pang
Thrusts the worm his glittering fang.
Soon the eagle with the snake
His delicious sport will take :
And through boundless upper air
The unresisting coiler bear,
In a rapture of confusion,
In ecstatic delusion ;
And when on the eagle's eyrie
Falls the serpent stunned and weary,
He resigns without a strife
His short heritage of life.

Thus by soothing drugs of death
Nature healeth, fresheneth
All her tribes, and by such giving
Maketh short life well worth living ;
While round her ancient, wreckful shore
Full tides of youth forever pour.

LAGO DI COMO

Out of the fight I fled; yet not
As cowards fly, but striking at my foe
With every backward step, and not one jot
Abating truth and honor, nor with show
Of courtesy to knaves nor truce with folly.
But not the less did bitter melancholy
Go with me ever, and my solitude
Was haunted by a brood
Of disillusion, doubts and scornful smiles:
Seeing how men are ruled by shallow wiles,
And in the world's high places
False hearts and hideous faces
Claim flattery and crowns,
And over gaping clowns
Have empire which no power but time effaces;—
So strong the power of brainless, soulless gold
By palsied hands controlled!

Unto the hills I fled. There at the feet
Of snowy-mantled summits, the swift tides
Of joy and pain seemed breaking evermore
Like foaming ripples beautiful and fleet
On some impregnable shore

LAGO DI COMO

Where land and ocean meet,
And where in ceaseless conflict peace abides.

The terraced vineyards and the towered town
Along the mountain margins sloping down,
Flooded with purples by Italian eve,
The castle on the peak, for which the night
Prepared a holy crown
Of stars, the sun-smit village gleaming bright, —
All seemed like cloudy creatures winged for flight,
Poising a moment to receive
The gift of air and ecstasy of light.
The works of man dissolved : or were one beam
In the supreme effulgence, proud to be
Transfigured, and to give their passing gleam
Of beauty to th' eternal joy they see.

My heart stood still and had no power for tears;
I felt the lost and lamentable years
Fall from me like a dream.
A little mountain maiden with large eyes
Offered me cyclamens; with smiles she stood,
The spirit of the springtime and the hills.
So I smiled with her; and the scornful mood
Vanished in sunset, as a discord dies
In vaster music; my remembered ills
Were but the harmless noise of yonder vale.

AT A TUSCAN VILLA

BENEATH your villa's ample vines
I drank your fragrant native wines;
I heard your cattle low, and saw
Your faithful servants heed your law.
It seemed a temperate retreat
From winter winds and summer's heat,
Where under smiling Tuscan skies
It were a pleasure to be wise.
Such was the house beside the sea
Of Virgil at Parthenope;
Such the felicity and charm
For Horace of his Sabine farm;
And nobler souls than these have found
In some sequestered plot of ground
Room for immortal thoughts, and friends
To serve imperishable ends.

Yon uplands of the Apennine
Have beckoned to a life divine;
And many a hermit breathing there
An unperturbed and cloistral air,
Has found, remote from friends and foes,
Fulfilment, triumph and repose.
Not less, old friend, though you and I

AT A TUSCAN VILLA

Climb no steep pathway to the sky,
Mankind compels us to confess
That cities are a loneliness,
And bids us oft prefer to these
Festivity with birds and trees.
It is because our hearts refuse
To live unloved, that thus we choose
To seek among plain folk and rude
What the spoiled world calls solitude.

THE DREAM-BUILDER

A POTENT wizard of forgotten name,
Whose hut was on a range of sand-blown hills
Between two towns of ancient Tartary,
By secret incantation and strong charm
Could draw men's dreams out from their sleeping brains
And give them visible shape. Some reached the stars
And filled the sky's deep dome with golden wings;
Some earthward clung; while others to and fro
Would wander in the formless air, like clouds
Which flock in mountain vales, or on the Sea
Spread the gray mantle of the mist, that hides
All else from sight yet shows no shape itself.

These dreams forthwith, such virtue had the spell,
Took their own places in the earth and sky,
Not less than if the finger of the Lord
Outreaching from the darkness round His throne,
Had shaped their being when the world was new.

So from the sand-blown range of treeless hills
Sprang new-born galaxies, dream after dream.

Yet all was magic. Uninvited eyes
Saw nothing. Travellers from their path astray

THE DREAM-BUILDER

In that magician's dwelling found a man
Sunk deep in thought, — no more. Some fancied him
A penitent in loveless hermitage,
Self-tortured by his own soul's fixed decree;
Or madman long forgot, concealing there
The ruins of his mind, as wounded birds
Hide dying in dark caves and are not seen.
Few heard his incantation; few believed
His magic could call substance from the void;
Still fewer through his dream-built worlds could move.
Yet no man wandering through Tartary
Passed o'er the sand-blown hills, but felt his soul
Uplifted into freedom and reborn;
And in the wilderness for many a day
Each found smooth ways, cool wells and balmy shade,
And heard the dear speech of his native land.

RETRO SATHANAS

I WOKE one night all trembling; a dim beam
Of moonlight slanted down my chamber-wall;
But blackness swam about me, and I saw
Close at my side a shape with human brows,
Which looked with odious eyes deep, deep in mine.
With pale and beckoning hands, it seemed to say:
“I am a spirit from the waning moon;
A thousand days I crouch with half-shut eyes
On that cold shore where the dull silver fades
From the mid-crescent into the abyss
Of shadow stretched between the icy horns.
Darkness and death are ever where I dwell.
I am thine own bad angel. I am he
Who, with what skill the moon-god trained me to,
Do torture that soft thing within thy breast.
I vex thy mind with doubts insoluble.
I lead in mockery beside the edge
Of soundless gulfs of being, — where below
Thy human pathway roars the deep of deeps,
Or where, more terrible than noise of storm,
The silence seems to make thine own light steps
Startle the dead abyss with evil sound.
Before thy mother looked upon thy face,
I nestled at thy side. I prompted thee

RETRO SATHANAS

Through all thy childish sins; and when in age
Thy desperate tears flow fast, thy withered face
Will show among time's honest wrinkles there
The lines my finger drew. All men who read
My writing in thy face will shrink from thee: —
But I will carve it on thee day by day.”

So ceased the phantom. But my angered soul
Shuddered no whit. I rose; I faced him square,
And gave him gaze for gaze, with words like these:
“Good brother demon! ’t was unmannerly
To break my sleep thus, — though the thing may pass
If thou art such an old acquaintance here.
Why is my young soul worth such long-laid plot
To ruin? Is thy moon-god in the cold
So much at loss for ways to spend his power,
That he must teach thee this industrious trick
Of netting minnows? Do I seem so pure,
Or was I ever so angelical,
That thy malicious hands befouling me,
Accomplish some bold insult against God?
Be not deceived, Old Snake! For wert thou he
Who coiled in Eden to sting simple Eve, —
I tell thee plainly ’t is my simple creed
That souls enslaved by thee were self-betrayed.
I do defy thy poison-plague to touch
The clean, sound part of me. O enemy
Of sickly souls! I mock thee, when I see

RETRO SATHANAS

How good men are, how good is my true self,
In spite of this perpetual devil's art
With which thou pliest us. See, spider, see
The one fly in thy webs, — and through the air
A million wings flash rainbows in the sun!
Such luck is Satan's setting traps for men.
I call thee thy right name now — do I so?
Go, Goat-foot! drop thy large, pretentious style!
Prince of the Air, art thou, whose royal garb
So savors of the dung-heap and the ditch?
If thou art devil, hear me! I am man.
I do defy, deride, exorcise thee.
I know thou dwellest not in any star,
Nor in the moon, nor nether deep dost hide.
Thou art the shadow of my own false fears;
Thou hast not even the names men call thee by;
For thou art nothingness and vacancy."

Then, waking with these words as one from swoon,
I saw the day-star at my casement shine;
A silver zone spread round the dawning East,
And singing through my chamber came a voice:
"My child, resist the devil, he will flee
From thee." And all that day was quietness.

AVE ROMA IMMORTALIS

ETERNAL Rome! They change thy robes of pride
And rend thy beauty from thee, as of old
Thy women in their mourning tore away
The vesture from the breast, and let loose hair
Flow tangled to the wind. Yet of thy soul
No Vandal, nor thine own unheeding sons,
Can spoil thee; and the soul of thee survives
All change and spoliation, — though it be
The envy of slow time, or sudden hand
Of unconsidered slaughter that consigns
Thy body to its doom of endless change.

Ruin in thee is perfect. Scars of shame,
Dark prodigies of chastisement and sin,
Have made themselves thy beauty; and men gaze
Entranced with fear and wonder that become
A passionate love of thee.

Yet all thy shows
Of visible wreck and glory overthrown
Are passing ripples in the soundless deep
Of thy forgotten grief. To mourn for thee,
Thee and thy fallen kingdoms numberless,
Is more than tears can do. For loss like thine

AVE ROMA IMMORTALIS

Silence alone is fit. Nor needest thou
The melancholy moon or midnight stars
To clothe thee in sad thoughts. The brightest noon
Shows best thy desolation, when the beams
Of the great, scornful sun shine pitiless
On the vast profanation of thy graves.

In youth I pondered with a heavy heart
On Rome so fallen. With shut eyes I sate
In silent places, meditating long
On death, fate, ruin, and all words of woe
Young hearts still dare to speak. But now I hear
A song of triumph in the ruins. Now
For Rome I weep no more; because her soul
Lives on, and they who love her learn at last
That if she seem dead, prostrate, overthrown,
'T is but fantastic vision and untrue.

I sing an *Ave Roma!* Soul of Rome,
Thou art invincible and glad. The streams
Of thine unnumbered fountains do not flow
More clear and vital from their mountain caves,
Than out of shadow speeds thy river of joy
In haste to feel the sun. Thy children sing
Right blithely o'er thy vacant sepulchres,
Or take dry bones for toys. The royal rose
Thrives well all winter long, amid the mould
Of Cæsar's palaces. Th' Unconquered Sun,

AVE ROMA IMMORTALIS

That *Sol Invictus*, once a god of thine,
Has quit us never; and the heart of man
Renews itself forever in the light
Of unexhausted heaven. Let the gods
Die and be buried! Let their altars fall!
O soul of Rome! O soul of me and mine!
We carve the satyr's revel on the stone
That hides the ashes of the dead — because
Life is invincible. Rome cannot die.
Her ruins bloom; her gray, old marble dust
Is youthful as her violets. 'T is here
The vestal fires burn forever bright
Upon the holy hearthstone of mankind.

Ave Roma Immortalis! We,
The sons of lamentable chance and change,
Touching thy wonder-relics, here receive
Healing and consolation, gifts of power,
And from thy world-worn heart perpetual song.
Hear, Rome, our nameless pilgrim prayers, and bless!
The pilgrims of to-morrow like ourselves
Will find great peace in thee when we are gone.

A STOIC'S CREED

A TRUE man shrinks not from his due of sweat.
His hard-won virtue is of lofty strain,
Even and all-subduing: it must grow
By patient knowledge and discerning art
To judge, clear-eyed, things human and divine.
Such is life's end and goal. If thou attain,
The fellow, not the suppliant, shalt thou be
Of blessed gods. How reach this pinnacle?
Not when thou toilest o'er the Apennine,
Or through Candavian wilds; no wreckful coast,
Nor Scylla nor Charybdis, needst thou see;
Nor buy safe-conduct of marauders bold.
The way is safe and plain. 'T is Nature's track,
From which not wandering thou shalt grow divine.
Divine! Can gold array thee like a god?
Or purple toga? Lo! the gods are naked.
Fame hast thou and applause? Remember, then,
How God abides unseen, and men blaspheme
Unpunished. Art thou great and worshipful
When on thy litter through the staring street
Thy slaves convey thee? Yet the highest God
Bears all things up, unaided and self-moved.
Seek thou for that which cannot change nor fail!
Where? In thy soul! Be just, benignant, free!

A STOIC'S CREED

So in thy body a great god shall dwell.
In slave or freedman or in Roman born
The soul alone is great. Our names of rank
Sprang from ambition or injurious deeds.
Thy only honor, worth and high degree
Is if a god inhabiteth in thee.

SENECA ON THE SOUL

I PRAY thee note how natural it seems
To send our thoughts out toward the infinite.
The mind of man loves things of large emprise,
Accepting for its own no humbler bounds
Than gods themselves receive. The mind abjures
A mean and local home. Though thou shouldst
 dwell

In Alexandria or Ephesus,
Or some more central city, yet thy mind
Claims for a fatherland the total sphere,
Yon round horizon clasping lands and seas,
Yon middle air and realm of sacred sky
Dividing and uniting gods and men,
Where rolls the host of stars which watch our actions.

Nor will thy mind accept the fatal bounds
Of fleeting time. For all the past is thine;
Each epoch gone stands legible and clear,
Translucent to the peering lamp of reason.
When comes the day — that day the foolish fear —
Which separates the god and man within thee,
Leaving thy body in the dust it sprang from,
Thou journeyest to the gods, who even now

SENECA ON THE SOUL

In this hard earthly prison, bless and cheer.
Through this short life's delays thou schoolest thee
To meet the longer, nobler life to come.

Oh, then what hidden things thy soul shall see!
This fog-bank scatters, and from every side
Light breaks upon thee. Thou shalt contemplate
That glory of so many mingling stars,
Streaming together in the tranquil deep
Of heaven, where no cloud or stain can be.
Both east and west in heaven look equal bright,
For light and dark are little changes known
Only in earthly air. Shalt thou not say,
When on thy nature the true light shall shine,
That all thy life was shadow hitherto?
Now dost thou but far off and dimly see,
With eyes of flesh, so feeble and so small;
But when at last upon thy total self
The total light shall smite thee through and through, —
O light of God! what glory shall it be!

Think on these things! From what is harsh and vile
They do absolve and purge. Thy life below
The gods are witness of; and if thou strive
To make thee worthy their eternal presence,
No sound of war nor fearful trumpet's blare
Can shake thee with one fear. To such as thee
Death is a promise. In thy mortal hour

SENECA ON THE SOUL

Thou shalt but break thy chain, and range abroad
To be forevermore an influence,
A memory, a goal, a high example,
A thought of honor in some noble heart,
Part of thy country's treasure and renown, —
And all that hear thy voice shall call thee friend.

THE ROXBURY LATIN SCHOOL

LONG may the light our fathers set
Remain, our glory and our debt,
And this small field bear harvest yet
 'Neath many a changing star!
Long may we guard the sacred flame,
And honor each heroic name,
And praise the men unknown to fame,
 Who made us what we are!

Here Socrates shall smile and die,
Here Cæsar's chariot thunder by,
Here laurelled Virgil sing and sigh,
 For listeners yet unborn.
Yet each new age new light shall shed
Upon the past and all its dead,
And wisdom with uplifted head
 Face to the rising morn.

Here youth with eye severely true
Shall all the paths of glory view,
And learn what shadows men pursue,
 Then choose its own proud way.
For something that will ne'er be taught
In every youthful soul is wrought,

THE ROXBURY LATIN SCHOOL

Some free and self-enkindled thought, —
The best of life's brief day.

Then dear and hallowed be the house
Where, with the sunlight on his brows,
Young Galahad assumes his vows

And takes the knightly part!
No need of priestly tapers pale,
Nor crimson robe nor silvered mail;
Enough, if to the Holy Grail
He brings a stainless heart.

TO OUR OLD HEAD-MASTER

(William Coe Collar)

HAIL, Guide and Friend! Our fellow pilgrim now
Choragus still, despite the silvered head!
Pause now, from climbing the hoar mountain's brow,
And bless the long procession thou hast led!

Did Mentor with his wisdom thee invest?
Or Chiron lend thee his persuasive lyre?
Or Socrates, of pedagogues the best,
Teach thee the harp-strings of a youth's desire?

Or at Eleusis didst thou enter in
To witness what solemnities austere
Absolve the mystic soul from taint of sin,
And render to the bright immortals dear?

Or rather did the legends vast and fair
Of sage or hero dead, bid thee no less
Time's new occasions grasp, and so prepare
Thy followers the age unborn to bless?

Not thine the blood-bought glory and applause
The martial trumpets of their heroes tell,
Who one brief day upheld their country's cause,
Or one wild hour withstood her foemen well.

TO OUR OLD HEAD-MASTER

Not thine the laurels mixed with mortal yew
Of melancholy genius, which would drive
Some vast thought to excess, till all but few
Lose in the vacuous height the wings to strive.

All thy long life was service. Thy free sword
Struck like Æneas at a phantom brood
Of falsehoods, fevered thoughts, and shapes abhorred
Which war against the spirit's lasting good.

Like fond Prometheus thou didst chiefly love
To mould firm shapes of men, and set them free
With touch of heavenly fire; yet jealous Jove
Frowned not, I deem, but lent high help to thee.

Io triumphe! Let thy triumph find
Something more sweet than praise to crown the strife!
See, second sire! these children of thy mind!
Fame is a ghost, a shadow. Love is life.

If aught in monument our age survive,
Not only of the strugglers in the glare
Of the gross world, who for fierce conquest strive,
But of those habitants of upland air

Who feed the springs of life, whereof mankind
Must ever drink, — if this be lasting fame, —
Then, friend, for whom our grateful hands have twined
This garland of a night — long lives thy name.

INDEPENDENCE DAY

BLOOD of the blond sea-rovers and fierce, black mountain-men,
Mixed with a home-bred lowland race that fished in river and fen,—
Such wild, red blood had England's youth, and it has not cooled since then.

Rovers ever the race has bred, as all the world may know.
But never a hearth like England's hearth so faithfully doth glow,
And every clime where men can breathe has English homes to show.

Out of the sea the New World rose; and many a brave ship flew
To plant old England's freedom there and bid it bloom anew,
Till fruit for every race it bore, and great and greater grew.

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Rovers out of the whole wide world poured in the land
to fill;

They yoked a continent with steel, broke monsters to
their will,

And wrought new things beneath the sun, with sinewy,
scornful skill.

Blithe was the new-born race of men. The lords of
memory

They met with mocking, or forgot; and under the
vaster sky

Did what they would or what they could, letting old
falsehoods die.

Many a race learned English speech, and under the
flag of stars

All free-born blood was mingled new and offered in
holy wars

To win for Man his manhood true, whatever the cost
of scars.

'T was well for England's freedom and well for the
hopes of Man,

That the New World race from the mother race drew
off an ocean-span.

Yet are we all one brotherhood, according to God's
plan.

TO JAPAN VICTORIOUS

LAND of flowers, land of fire,
Of lava mountains and of azure seas!
Weaving webs of delicate desire,
Imperial lady on a throne
Of golden lotos, thou didst sit alone
Watching the centuries,
As one whose life was but a dream or song,
While oft thy giant foes feared not to do thee wrong.

But all thy beauty clothed a soul of flame;
Thy cold and calm were like the glittering snows
On Fuji's smouldering crest;
For treasured in thy breast
Was energy that never knew repose;
Thy princes went and came,
Each with two swords, and terribly possessed
The art to die for honor, freedom, fame.

Light-hearted Europe — a barbaric boy —
Bought of thee many a toy;
And for the knick-knacks taught thee to employ
More horrible and swifter ways to slay;
Harnessed thee lightnings and the seas subdued;

TO JAPAN VICTORIOUS

Bade thee go cast thy gods of calm away,
And joining Europe's unforgetful feud,
Fight off thy foes with fire, like thy brood
Of air-born dragons in Earth's primal day.

Now are the dragon's teeth upon thee sown.
Around thy fields of blood our plaudits roar.
Thou art become as one of us! We own
Death, earth's old arbiter, our friend once more.
For lo! when thou didst launch, with well-poised hand,
Thy new forged thunderbolt upon that land
Where throne and people were alike in thrall, —
Behold the mockery crumbled! At thy call
From their blind-eyed repose
The tortured bondmen rose;
And like a blood-red banner bright,
A vast volcanic light
Streams out of chaos round the thrones of wrong;
While with fraternal song
The free-born lands acclaim thy victory won:
"Hail to our Sister of the Rising Sun!"

O bleeding, but invincible, arise!
Pour forth more fire across the morning skies
To quicken, to consume,
Fruitful of doom,
Kindling with death the glory
Of new immortal story!

TO JAPAN VICTORIOUS

Set the slave free!
Burn off from land and sea
All that is fed on blood or bloody gold!
Save thee, our Sister! Save thy lands and ours
From ogres crowned with flowers,
From clamorous vulture-powers,
By whom our wailing world is half controlled,
While snares of steel and fire their naked victims hold.

Then, Sister, take once more
Upon thy blossoming shore
Thy throne of beauty on the Lotos pure;
And with heroic heart,
Achieve with us the art
Of truth that shall endure,
Of balm all plagues to cure,
Of popular will subdued
To sovereign peace and good,
Till for late harvest our terrestrial ball
Bear brotherhood for all.

THE MAKING OF MAN

(Delivered before the Φ B K at Harvard, June, 1894)

LONG is the story of a ripening star;
And if her sages guess their riddle true,
Our green Earth tarries in the tender bud,
Involving precious issues unforeseen
Save this — her fruit is Man. For him, the storm
Scarred the lone peak, and lashed the barren sea;
For him the planet, in her cloudy prime,
Endured the slow plasticity of life,
Mere mindless gemmules, gross fecundity,
Fierce joys of motion, shock of foe with foe,
And ecstasies of stimulated sense;
For him great Nature through all creatures poured
Bacchantic drops of madness and desire,
Which unto canticles of passion strange
Surged on and on, until the rhapsody
Burst the dim dreams of sense; then stirred the SOUL
Its wings in happy air; then wisdom woke,
And love found words; then looked the heavens on MAN,
Emerging from his chrysalis the brute, —
Child of the Dust and Master of the World!

These miracles, like music whose full close
The patient prelude justifies, prepared

THE MAKING OF MAN

More signs and wonders. For then seemed to cease
New fashions of the fleshly instrument,
And *Soul*, henceforth contented to possess
Man's body as the utmost flesh can do,
Put forth intrinsic gifts.

The art of words,
First sign and vehicle of brotherhood,
Supplanted the old, helpless monotonous,
And on remembered syllables of power
Saved each man's truth for all. The truth-taught hand
Shaped the hard flint, the mammoth brute subdued,
Or seizing flame, — a half-celestial sword, —
Conquered all climes, and on the kindly hearth,
Found for the Sun a new vicegerent god,
More exorable. So Man's kingdom grew
Along vast rivers, and o'er islands green,
Till in the chronicle of times forgot,
His angel-tribe o'erran the finished globe;
For after him the seas broke bound no more,
And mountains moved not o'er the nether fire.

Then rose a man-made world. The willing stone
Soared into forms of worshipped loveliness;
Sweet music borrowed from the choral stream
Of Nature's unrestrained Æolian airs
What best could flow in tempered melody,
In dear, consenting numbers, oft renewed.
The Poets then began: their mighty dreams

THE MAKING OF MAN

Repeopled land and sea with shapes of gods,
The eldest progeny of soul from soul.
For Man's first god was his first dream of good,
The disembodied glory of his mind
In far-off clouds confining. By such prayers
The soul was taught to feel its noblest powers
Not self-begotten, not of mortal name,
But from the central orb of wonder born,
And all-creative Love, that cannot die.

So Man's long childhood passed. The wonder was
How rainbow fancies guided truth so well,
And false Hesperides, or Fleece of Gold,
To genuine treasures lured. Slowly, at last,
Out of a chaos of dim dreams arose
The sphere of Knowledge, — separable, firm, —
Knowledge in demonstrable light displayed,
Man's one sure standing-ground above the chasm
And fathomless abyss beside his way.

Each mighty people some new province won
From dreams and darkness to the realms of light.
The labyrinthine secrets multiplied
And passed in heritage from race to race:
Beneath the snow-topped Himalayan wall,
In far Cathay, or on the Phrygian hills,
Or 'mid the Babylonian multitude,
Or shadowed shrines of immemorial Nile,

THE MAKING OF MAN

The sons of light in nameless wisdom toiled,
Till Athens laughed at Asia's priestly awe,
Turned her firm forehead to the gods of dawn,
Achieved for Europe's infancy the dower
Of liberated reason, — then bequeathed
To new-born nations her immortal name.

Mighty the host of men who lived and died
To conquer truth; but father of them all
Prometheus was, whose dole of stolen fire
So shook the skies, and touched Man's drowsy clay
With such celestial spark, that since his hour
Heaven keeps no secret long.

Age after age

Such wanderers widen our small world for us.
Dim stars, but true, resistless draw them on
To find that glory just outside the dark,
The half-won truth men guessed but dared not know;
And God's best gift to Liberty it is,
To be a fruitful mother of such sons.

So rises an eternal House of Truth,
For Man to live in and make beautiful;
Strong arch on arch is built, and founded deep
Below the shifting sands of childish guess,
Its solid towers outwatch the annual stars.

Oh, strange, imperial fate! Not from the stars
Falls now the charter of Man's destinies.

THE MAKING OF MAN

His glorious horoscope himself he draws,
Where'er his mind is on its throne, set free
From sluggish customs of the troglodyte.

Now hath our busy race that labored so
Its mere first foothold on this star to prove,
To higher tasks arrived. For sovereign sway
Profits but little, till the Conqueror
Surround his throne with chivalry and song;
And Man, earth's Lord and King, must keep his
crown

By beauty, virtue, and fair courtesies,
And o'er his brows white, royal jewels wear
Of stainless truth, clear faith and steadfast will,
With love's great ruby flaming over all.

Through the doleful past no more
Peer with fond and fearful look!
Earth hath sealed that record-book
Of the guests she housed before;
Her hospitable board is spread
For the living, not the dead.
O that the golden Muse of Song
Might her old, old runes forget,
And find a race of singers strong
To break her Libyan reed, her Doric shell,
And in more potent numbers tell
A music never vocal yet!



THE MAKING OF MAN

Oh, that her heaven-glancing eye
Looked no more on Memory!

Say not earth was born too soon,
Like her pale, sequacious moon!
Not racked with age is this old earth,
All her throes are throes of birth,
All the secrets that she knows
She lavished on her last-blown rose.

Too long we blamed the barren field,
Too long the winds accused,
The world we live in stands revealed
Exhaustless, but unused!
Yet he who curbs the lightning's force
Sweats drudging at his wheel;
His art foretells the comet's course,
Whose own the Fates conceal.

But say not Man, the ages' heir,
Of his primal force can fail, —
Or receiveth an entail
Of decrepitude, despair!
Oft the reëngendered race
Will improve th' ancestral place,
Renovate the mansion old,
And statelier revels hold.



THE MAKING OF MAN

Freshly from the burning sun
Speeds the free ethereal fire,
In each new-born life to run,
Flaming high in son as sire;
Man's blest blood and quality
Was not of his fathers bred;
Son of the round-world is he,
And his good health is nourishèd
By confluence of every wind and sea,
By stars no eye hath seen,
By all the Past hath been,
And by the powers not yet begun to be.

Already dawns the gifted, golden time
To heaven-instructed seer and sibyl known,
When conquering quite the monsters of the prime
Man shall be man indeed,
And serving human need
Hold an unshaken throne
O'er all false gods and tyrants of an hour,
O'er plague and famine, wrath and crime,
Omnipotent in peaceful power.

The waves by exiles crossed,
Though loudly still the ocean-thunders roll,
Their ancient power have lost
To stop the speech of yearning soul with soul;
No island in the tropic seas
Looks at the sun in solitude;

THE MAKING OF MAN

They signal on the conscious breeze
The island-brotherhood.

Some future wizard will control
That cold aurora of the sunless pole;
O'er the Alps his station take,
Of the earth his magnet make,
Touch a key, and master so
The universal dynamo
To turn a wheel, or tell a story,
Flood the midnight sea with glory,
Or flash across a thousand miles
The sunlight in a lover's smiles.
Then where'er an exile roam,
Love will always be at home.

But outcasts with a heavy heart
Will cross strange lands as lost stars drop through
space,
Where every eye may trace
The pathway of their fall.

A vast Arachne, the electric art
Will fold in glittering web this planetary ball.¹

Then shall no nation wear
A glory none may share;
But each shall publish to the world its best,

¹ Written before Marconi's invention.

THE MAKING OF MAN

Each ask of all the rest

Glad interchange of treasures or delight;

And all will have more might

If one grows strong; for strength will then incite,

Not envy or pretence,

Not hedge-hog self-defence,

But emulation in true excellence;

And no man then will try a hostile blow

On aught but circumstance, his oft-revanquished foe.

Each land another's grief shall feel!¹

As ever in thy woe or weal,

France! unto thee all free-born hearts are kin;

But chiefly ours, who caught the sacred flame

Of liberty from thy prophetic song,

And watched with thee when freedom's morn came in.

"O Liberty, what crimes are in thy name!"

What prodigies of wrong!

Like Dion, fallen in a festal hour,

With palm and laurel o'er his bosom crossed,

Lies that pure chieftain, to his people lost,

But not to glory, or his country's fame.

Oft had he put to shame

The sensual traffickers in power;

No tinselled soldier he,

Of braggart chivalry!

¹ The body of President Carnot then lay in state.

THE MAKING OF MAN

No borrower of mighty names outworn !
A patriot's duty such as he fulfil
By fruitful industry at eve and morn,
By resolute and ever loyal will,
And reconcile, by many-counselled light,
The public good with clamorous private right.

We praise thee, France, that such a noble son
Fell not by rival, nor his own rash mind,
Nor by compatriot-stroke undone,
But by a frenzied foe of all mankind.

We, who twice, since our wild grief of war,
Have heard a nation's dirges toll,
Twice arrayed the sable-trophied car —
Thy sister-sorrow strikes us to the soul !
Too well we know, not yet appears the day
When Liberty may cast her shield away.

Man against his brothers striving,
Sang triumphal songs in vain.
Nobler contests are arriving,
Battles without hate or pain.

Let the captains of to-day
Lead their men to bloodless fray !
Inspire the rank and file with generous faith !
Not liveried for the tasks of death,
But ever o'er a calmer world

THE MAKING OF MAN

Their federating flag unfurled,
Lead on the legions of the free,
Not to shield the crimes of thrones,
Not to lacquey royal drones,
But to fulfil the dear behest
Of light-uplifting Liberty —
Star-crowned Colossus of the West!

Already from the Future's purple cloud
A vast, dim shape looms clear,
It is *Cosmopolis*, a city proud,
Not bounded by what limit man may draw,
But only by the round earth's atmosphere.
To either pole, her sacred speech and law
Shall give decree.

Her suburbs are the islands of the sea,
Her hanging gardens from the Andes crown
To equatorial valleys sloping down,
To solace her cold Northern citizens —
Who haply, on their ships of air,
In sultry June will idly fare
Through clouds, above the green Siberian fens.

We know not how Man's life shall look
In that World-City; scarce our dreams may brook
The beauty and delight of times unborn,
And far from ours as Europe's glacial morn.
God who protecteth man

THE MAKING OF MAN

From dizzying view of things too vast and far,
Diminishes the future's star
To one white beam of hope within the sky,
Which we may travel by!

But one clear truth we know:
However huge Man's world may grow,
The mother in her babe will see
A universe of mystery,
Love, in love's replying eyes,
Meet perennial surprise,
And the circumference of the starry whole
Find centre in each human soul.

For God made not His world for naught,
Nor to a creature did resign
Co-regency with star-enkindling thought,
That one more soulless orb among His hosts should
shine.

Man did not get his planet for a toy,
By spendthrift folly to despoil
The fabric of Æonian toil, —
But that the choral seas and skies
With his own heart should harmonize
In antiphones of praise and joy!
Man's terrestrial primacy
Is a symbol eloquent,

THE MAKING OF MAN

That omnipotence can be
Not in powers we touch and see.

Our earth-born dust of Deity partakes,
Only when th' interior spirit breaks
The sleep of dust's captivity,
And with illuminating love,
Rules the sphere, as God his spheres above
In self-forgetful sovereignty.

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